



State Board Briefed on State Superintendent's Planned SARC Improvements

In May 2006, California Department of Education (CDE) staff provided the California State Board of Education (SBE) with a brief update on various School Accountability Report Card (SARC) improvement efforts that were launched by Superintendent O'Connell in his 2006 State of Education address. Specifically, Superintendent O'Connell made improving the readability of the SARC a top priority.

Over time the SARC template has grown to include nearly 60 separate data elements and has become difficult for its intended audience of parents and community members to read and understand. To accomplish the State Superintendent's goal, a meeting of interested stakeholders was convened by the Hewlett Foundation, in conjunction with the CDE, in January 2006. Since then, three working groups have met regularly to discuss the following areas of the SARC: readability, executive summary/streamlining, and common release date (i.e., a uniform statewide deadline for publishing SARCs).

As a result of these discussions, the CDE will propose a revised SARC template and data definitions to the SBE in July 2006. The proposed

template, for use in preparing SARCs during the 2006-07 school year, will significantly differ from the current version of the SARC template in terms of organization, format and presentation of data, and narrative descriptions of data elements. It will also include an optional executive summary comprised of about 20 elements designed to provide a quick snapshot of school accountability.

Once approved by the SBE, the CDE will make the SARC template (in a Word format without data) and data definitions available on the CDE Web site. The CDE anticipates making the SARC template with data available for downloading in mid-September 2006.

Updates on Pending Legislation Affecting the SARC

- [Senate Bill 1510 \(Alquist\)](#) — This bill would make technical, nonsubstantive changes to the law that directs the CDE to develop a SARC template and recommend its adoption by the SBE. The bill, which is sponsored by the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, proposes to repeal a number of reporting

elements from inclusion in the SARC (for further information, see the most recently amended version of the bill). SB 1510 passed out of the State Senate on May 30, 2006, and is currently awaiting action in the State Assembly.

- [Assembly Bill 1837 \(Daucher\)](#), as amended on April 5, 2006 — This bill, an urgency measure that would take immediate effect, would require the CDE, by January 1, 2007, to recommend for SBE adoption a SARC template revision that would include several new data fields for reporting school budgetary information. The bill, which is sponsored by the Governor's Office of the Secretary for Education, failed passage in the Assembly Education Committee on April 26, 2006.

- [Assembly Bill 1917 \(DeVore\)](#), as amended on March 20, 2006 — This bill would require school district governing boards to compile a yearly report containing a variety of school employee salary and benefit cost information, and to include this information in annual school report cards. The bill, which is sponsored by the author, failed passage in the Assembly Education Committee on April 26, 2006.

If you have questions or comments about the topics covered in this newsletter, or suggestions for topics for a future newsletter, please contact us as indicated below.

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